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Shiite-Palestinian Warfare Rages for 5th Day in Beirut

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BEIRUT, Lebanon, May 23 — Fierce fighting continued for a fifth day today in and around three Palestinian refugee camps, the object of a drive by Shiite Moslem militiamen.

The militia, Amal, said Wednesday night that its forces had taken control of two of the camps, Sabra and Shatila, in southern Beirut, but were continuing to meet heavy resistance there and in the third camp, Burj al Brajneh, near the international airport.

Amal was reported to be directing machine-gun fire and rocket-propelled grenades into Burj al Brajneh but to have made no attempt to move in.

The police said at least 201 people had been killed and 1,165 wounded since the clashes broke out Sunday. The Red Cross and officials on both sides said the toll was likely to rise when bodies still in the battle area were counted.

["It's a horrific tragedy," a Palestinian spokesman told The Associated Press. He said the Shiites were "pulverizing the camps, house by house, with heavy artillery and tank cannon. Dozens of bodies are lying in the streets. They won't let the Red Cross in."]

P.L.O. Role in Lebanon

The Shiite Moslems are seeking control of the camps as part of an effort to prevent the Palestinians from re-establishing a military foothold in Lebanon. Leaders of Amal have said the return of a significant Palestine Liberation Organization presence in Lebanon would invite Israeli retaliation against Shiites in the south.

The Shiites are seeking to occupy the camps militarily to prevent them from becoming bases of support for future P.L.O. guerrilla activity. Sabra and Shatila were the scene of a massacre of more than 300 civilians by Lebanese Christian militiamen in 1982.

A total of 30,000 Palestinians, of whom about 1,000 are P.L.O. guerrillas, are thought to live in the three camps.

Katyusha Rockets Fired

For the second consecutive day, Palestinian guerrillas manning artillery and rocket positions in the mountains east of the city fired shells and Katyusha rockets at the Shiites to provide help to the camps.

The Amal leader, Nabih Berri, sent urgent messages to Arab Governments saying that all his organization wanted was for the Palestinians in the three camps to put their arms away in warehouses that would be supervised by neutral political groups in Lebanon.

Officials of Amal were meeting with representatives of a Syrian-backed Palestinian alliance, the Palestinian National Salvation Front, at the town of Mukhtara in the Shuf mountains southeast of here.

The talks are sponsored by the Druze chieftain, Walid Jumblat, an ally of the Syrians and Amal. "Voice of the Mountain," the radio station of Mr. Jumblat's followers, said a solution to the problem of the camps was under review.

In another development, a mass funeral was held in Christian East Beirut today for dozens of victims of a huge car-bomb explosion on Wednesday.

Christian radio stations said more bodies were recovered from under the debris overnight and today, bringing the total number of dead to 60. More than 100 were wounded.

East Beirut observed a one-day work stoppage in protest at the explosion, which has been described as the most horrific in the Christian half of the capital since the former President-elect, Bashir Gemayel, was killed in a bomb blast on Sept. 14, 1982.

Eighty people were killed and 200 injured when a car bomb exploded in Bir al Abed in the mainly Shiite southern suburbs of Beirut last March 8.

No one has taken responsibility for the bombing on Wednesday. Christian newspapers reported today that the car bomb appeared to have had the power of 800 pounds of TNT.

No Warning

The blast occurred without a warning on a busy street during the rush hour. Many of those who died were children in a bus that was passing at the time. Other victims were trapped in blazing cars or crushed when parts of buildings collapsed.

One reason for the collective burial was that many victims were mutilated or burned beyond recognition. The Red Cross today issued notices to families of persons missing since the explosion to visit the morgue to inspect bodies just recovered.

Investigators have not yet offered any indication as to who may be responsible or as to the motive, but there have been some theories in the news media. One said the car, identified as a Japanese-made pickup truck, was going somewhere else when it went off prematurely.

It was noted that the East Beirut explosion was meant to be even more horrendous than the one at Bir al Abed, and some analysts believe it could have been a retaliation for the carnage in the Moslem quarter.

The explosion on Wednesday occurred about a week after American newspapers reported that Lebanese intelligence agents trained by the United States Central Intelligence Agency had fired the group that set off the Bir al

Abed car bomb.

Sheik Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, the Shiite scholar, said in speech that President Amin Gemayel was to blame for the blast last March because, the cleric charged, the President had allowed his intelligence service to cooperate with the Americans.

Sheik Fadlallah, who is identified by news organizations as the leader of the militant Party of God, was an apparent target of the Bir al Abed explosion, which occurred near his residence. He escaped injury because he happened to be praying in a nearby mosque.

President Gemayel owns a house in the area of the explosion Wednesday, although he now resides in the presidential palace in Baabda, a Christian suburb of Beirut.